

What is claimed is:

[Claim 1] 1. A system for distributing data, comprising:

an information card having a front surface, a back surface, and four edges defining a rectangular shape such that said information card resembles a conventional business card;
said information card including upon its said front surface visually-recognizable indicia;
said information card including upon its said back surface at least one stripe zone and a ring zone able to contain magnetically recorded instances of the data; and
a reader including a stationary read mechanism to read the data magnetically recorded in at least one of said zones by placing said information card proximate to said stationary read mechanism.

[Claim 2] 2. The system of claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said zones does contain the data and further includes data identifiers associated with at least some of the data; and
said reader initiates an action automatically in response to reading specific instances of said data identifiers.

[Claim 3] 3. The system of claim 2, wherein:

said reader includes a database of records having a plurality of uniquely identified fields; and
said action is storing instances of the data into said uniquely identified fields of said records when said data identifiers associated with the data match said uniquely identified fields.

[Claim 4] 4. The system of claim 2, wherein:

said reader includes a telephone device; and
when the data includes a telephone number, said action is dialing said telephone number.

[Claim 5] 5. The system of claim 2, wherein:

said reader includes a global positioning system (GPS) device and a display unit; and
when the data includes GPS data, said action is displaying a map or route based on said GPS data on said display unit.

[Claim 6] 6. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of said zones further includes at least one data orientator to permit reading the data regardless of a relative orientation of said information card relative to said stationary read mechanism.

[Claim 7] 7. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of said zones includes stored instances of the data including extensible markup language tagging.

[Claim 8] 8. The system of claim 1, wherein said information card is constructed with a paper or plastic based substrate material, to facilitate economical manufacture of said information card.

[Claim 9] 9. An information card for distributing data, comprising:
a front surface, a back surface, and four edges defining a rectangular shape such that the information card resembles a conventional business card;
the information card including upon its said front surface visually-recognizable indicia; and
the information card including upon its said back surface at least one stripe zone and a ring zone able to contain magnetically recorded instances of the data, wherein at least one of said zones is readable by placing said information card proximate to a stationary read mechanism.

[Claim 10] 10. The information card of claim 9, wherein at least one of said zones does contain the data.

[Claim 11] 11. The information card of claim 10, wherein the data includes at least one encoded version of at least some of said visually-recognizable indicia appearing upon said front surface of the information card.

[Claim 12] 12. The information card of claim 10, wherein at least one of said zones further includes data identifiers associated with at least some of the data.

[Claim 13] 13. The information card of claim 10, wherein at least one of said zones further includes at least one data orientator to permit reading the data regardless of a relative orientation of the information card relative to said stationary read mechanism.

[Claim 14] 14. The information card of claim 10, wherein at least one of said zones includes instances of the data including extensible markup language tagging.

[Claim 15] 15. The information card of claim 9, wherein the information card is constructed with a paper or plastic based substrate material, to facilitate economical manufacture of the information card.